

REMARKS/ARGUMENT

Claim 1 has been amended to require the isobutylene to be present in a C₄ hydrocarbon mixture in an amount of 5-15%. Support for this amendment exists throughout the present application, including page 3, lines 17-19.

New claims 6-8 have been added. Support for these new claims exists throughout the present specification, including the original claims.

The Office Action rejected the pending claims under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as obvious over Okumura in view of Smith. In view of the following comments, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection.

The present invention relates to producing a tert butyl alcohol from a C₄ hydrocarbon mixture containing a low level of isobutylene. The cited art neither teaches nor suggests that useful methods of producing a tert butyl alcohol could be practiced using such low levels of isobutylene.

More specifically, Okumura relates to more conventional methods in which C₄ hydrocarbon mixtures containing a high level of isobutylene, such as those obtained through steam or catalytic cracking of petroleum, are used. (See, col. 2, lines 24-26). Nothing in Okumura would lead one skilled in the art to use a C₄ hydrocarbon mixture containing a low level of isobutylene, particularly in view of the concentration dilution which occurs when solvent is added. That is, nothing in Okumura would lead one skilled in the art to believe that sufficient reaction speed could be obtained using a C₄ hydrocarbon mixture containing a low level of isobutylene, particularly in view of the subsequent concentration dilution which occurs when solvent is added, to yield a useful process.

Nothing in Smith compensates for these critical deficiencies. Smith merely relates to a distillation apparatus, and neither teaches nor suggests using a C₄ hydrocarbon mixture containing a low level of isobutylene.

Thus, neither Okumura nor Smith, alone or in combination, teaches or suggests the claimed invention.

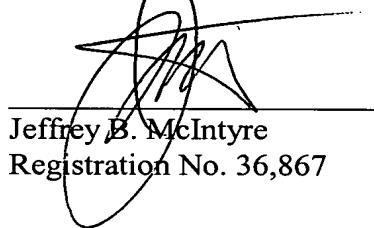
This is particularly true for new claims 6-8. Nothing in any of the cited references teaches or suggests using the required solvents set forth in these claims as well.

In view of the above, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103.

Applicants believe that the present application is in condition for allowance. Prompt and favorable consideration is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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